

**A POST-COLONIAL STUDY:
ORIENTALISM AS PORTRAYED IN *THE KARATE KID* MOVIE**

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining
the Bachelor Degree in English Literature



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2016

A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I declare that this graduating paper is my own and I am completely responsible for the contain of this graduating paper. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete refferences.

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**A POST-COLONIAL STUDY:
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ABSTRACT

The Karate Kid is a movie that tells about the struggle of a boy named Dre who must move from America to China with his mother. In China, Dre felt cannot stand and uncomfortable since he got beatings and disruption continuously by Cheng and friends. Then Dre met Mr. Han and he got help from Mr. Han. After that Dre started to learn about Kung Fu from Mr. Han. Using great effort Dre eventually won the competition of Kung Fu by beating Cheng and his friends, Dre also received recognition from them and not disturbed anymore. The film itself is the West movie and directed also by Western. What's interesting about this movie is how this film depicts the character and characterization of the West and the East side, and how the director showed the superiority of the Western powers towards the East through Dre's character who could win the tournament of Kung Fu. Hence, the researcher wants to examine the portrayal of Orientalism that appears in the movie. This research uses a qualitative method and using library research method. The researcher applies Post-colonial theory with the approach of Orientalism by Edward Said. Orientalism itself is thought that the West has the authority to provide stereotypes and construct the East. The purposes of these things are to show the domination of the West superiority to the East. The result from this research is about how the West constructs and depicts the East and the West itself through this film. This study also shows the gap that occurs in the film using a binary opposition. Then all closed by showing the portrayal of Orientalism in *The Karate Kid* movie.

Keywords: Binary Opposition, Post-Colonial, Orientalism, West, East

**A POST-COLONIAL STUDY:
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By: Cadipa D. Prawara

ABSTRAK

The Karate Kid merupakan sebuah film yang menceritakan perjuangan seorang anak laki-laki bernama Dre yang harus pindah dari Amerika ke China bersama ibunya. Di China Dre merasa tidak betah dan nyaman karena mendapatkan pengeroyokan dan gangguan terus menerus dari Cheng dan temana-temannya. Kemudian Dre bertemu dan ditolong oleh pak Han. Setelah itu Dre mulai belajar tentang Kung Fu dari pak Han. Dengan usaha yang keras akhirnya Dre bisa memenangkan kompetisi Kung Fu dan mengalahkan Cheng beserta teman-temannya, Dre pun mendapat pengakuan dari mereka dan tidak diganggu lagi. Film ini sendiri merupakan film Barat dan disutradarai juga oleh orang Barat. Yang menarik dari film ini adalah bagaimana film ini menggambarkan karakter dan sifat dari pihak Barat maupun Timur, terdapat pula bagaimana superioritas kekuatan Barat terhadap Timur melalui karakter Dre yang bisa memenangi turnamen Kung Fu. Dari sinilah peneliti ingin meneliti gambaran dari Orientalisme yang muncul didalam film ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan menggunakan metode penelitian pustaka. Peneliti menggunakan teori Post-Kolonial dengan pendekatan Orientalisme dari Edward Said. Orientalisme sendiri merupakan pemikiran dimana Barat mempunyai kemampuan untuk memberikan stereotip dan mengkonstruksi pihak Timur. Tujuan dari hal-hal tersebut adalah untuk menunjukkan superioritas bangsa Barat dan mendominasi bangsa Timur. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah tentang bagaimana Barat mengkonstruksi dan menggambarkan orang Timur dan Barat itu sendiri di dalam film ini. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan kesenjangan yang terjadi di film menggunakan opisisi biner. Kemudian semua ditutup dengan menunjukkan gambaran Orientalisme yang ada di dalam film *The Karate Kid* ini.

Kata Kunci: Oposisi Biner, Post-Kolonial, Orientalisme, Barat, Timur

MOTTO

“One day you’ll leave this world behind,

So live a life you will remember”

(The Nights – Avicii)



DEDICATION

To *Bapak* Ismail and *Ibu* Etty,
thank you for being my parents

To my big brother *Mas* Pecut and his wife *Mbak* Opik,
thank you for take care of me as long as I stay in
Jogja

To my brother and sisters
Mbak Dita, *Mas* Eba, and *Nok* Dundun

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Assalamu'alaikum wr. wb

First of all, the researcher would like to say thaks to Allah the Most beneficent, the Most merciful, for His guidances, so that the researcher can complete the writing of graduating paper entitled **“A Post-Colonial Study: Orientalism as Represented In the Karate Kid Movie”**.

On this occasion, the researcher wants to express her deep gratitude to the honorable:

1. Prof. Dr.AlwanKhoiri, M.A., As the Dean of Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences.
2. Dr. Ubaidillah, M. Hum as the Head of English Department and as my academic advisor.
3. Witriani, Ph.D as my advisor who always give help, guidance and advice throughout these months.
4. Alm. Jiah Fauziah, M. Hum. May Allah give the best place for you, Fuad Arif Furdiartanto, S. Pd, M. Hum, M. Ed, Danial Hidayatullah, M. Hum., Ulyati Retnosari, M. Hum., Dwi Margo Yuwono, M. Hum., Bambang Haryanto, M.A., Arif Budiman, M.A., and all lectures of English Department who have given the researcher supports and wise guidances.
5. My beloved father, mother, brothers, and sisters who have given supports and advices in finishing this final research.

6. Arif, Fuad, Roni, Sekar, Widi, Nisa, Irfan, Atika, Atin, Bunbun, Suci Anwar, Hikmah, Yuni, Adnan, Takbir and all of my friends in chapter 2012.
7. My precious partner, Ria Damayanti, S.H.
8. My teammates in Elite/Genosida thank you for every single sweat in the field.
9. My fellas in ECC UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.
10. All of my friend in chapters 2011, 2013, 2014.
11. All people who have read and appreciated this research paper.

Furthermore, the researcher recognizes that this research paper is very far from perfection because of the limited knowledge of the researcher. Therefore, criticism and suggestion are always needed by the researcher for the perfection of this paper. Finally, the researcher hopes that all parties whom the researcher has mentioned above achieve rewards from Allah. In addition to that, hopefully this research can be useful for the reader.

Wassalamu'alaikum wr. wb

Yogyakarta, 26 November 2016

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Literature has two functions that are to entertain and to educate. In education a work of literature can be an object of study because literature is a reflection of human condition in a certain era. According to Abrams, “The term is applied to a number of works in drama and prose fiction which have in common the view that human condition can be adequately represented only in works of literature that are themselves absurd (2009: 1)”. To educate literature can be used to create dream world of everyone that they always imagine before.

One kind of literatures is modern literature or popular culture. The examples of literary works of popular culture are song and movie. According to William, movie becomes popular culture because people for themselves make the popular culture and even though it displaces folk culture, it is important since it is modern emphasis (1963: 35). Considering movie becomes popular culture it makes movie is consumed by people around the world. In this time everyone is able to enjoy movie in a lot of ways, they can watch the movie in cinema, they can buy CD/DVD, and also they can watch the movie in their television.

The researcher is interested to analyze movie because of some reasons. First, movie is one of popular culture. Most of people consume movie and

spend their time to watch it. This condition is like what Rewai Makamani state in her book.

“Thus, information from television, films, and mass media in general, has impacted greatly on how we spend our daily lives. The television in particular, is arguably the most important source of information and entertainment in the modern world. Apparently, to talk about television is also to talk about the film because television without film is unimaginable” (2007: 1).

Second, one of the reasons why the movie becomes a popular and interesting is because the movie presents an imaginative world. Thus, it can bring people escape from their tired of real life. Third, since the movie is consumed by people around the world, it means that movie could give a big influence to its consumer. Sometimes a movie brings the idea or issue of the topics that appear in society such as religion, history, culture and other. However, the movie also can be used as the media to ruin or to discriminate a group by making propaganda about them, like giving a stereotype or describe them with some bad qualities.

The Karate Kid movie is created in 2010. This movie is directed by Harald Zwart. This movie is a kind of action drama movie. Hence, this movie contains a complex story. This movie is not just present the action and fight of the characters but it also tells about the daily life of each character in the movie. The action and daily life scene of the characters in this movie has connection to the theme of research.

In *The Karate Kid* movie, the West constructs the image of East. This movie presents the qualities both of Western and Eastern. This movie contains Orientalism issue that needs to be analyzed. There are some inequality qualities between the West and East.

Orientalism is an important issue that needs to be discussed because it exists till now. The simple example is Orientalism that appears in *The Karate Kid Movie*, one of kinds modern movie. In this movie there are some differences and inequality between West and East that put the East inferior than West. This kind of discrimination is exists till now but only a few of people that aware about this phenomenon.

The Karate Kid tells story about the American boy named Dre who moves from Detroit – a city in US – to Beijing – the capital city of China -. Then he meets Harry another West character that full of kindness. There also East characters such as Cheng and his friends, Master Li, Mr. Han, and Meiyong. Cheng and his friends always bully and disturb Dre. In several times they used cruelty to Dre. Master Li is Cheng and friends Kung Fu teacher, he is the one who teaches Cheng and friends become cruel boys in arena.

Not all of the East characters are portrayed as the bad guy. There is also Mr. Han a maintenance man who teaches Dre the “real” Kung Fu and Meiyong a Chinese girl who becomes one of Dre’s best friends. But still both of them are portrayed with a stereotypical as primitive. In this movie Dre shows that

he is able to defeat Cheng and his friend in a fair match of tournament. And also he can understand and apply the essential of “real” Kung Fu.

From all those facts the movie shows a gap between the Chinese and America. It tells that the West is dominant and powerful than the East. The East also is just a cruel and bad people compared with the West. Depends on the Islamic perspective as the belief of the researcher, it is forbidden for the human to feel that they are the best than all of the other, and the other is lower than them. It is like what Allah said in the Holy Qur'an, surah Ar-Rum

وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ . مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

(الرُّم: ٣١-٣٢)

And be not you among those who join gods with Allah. Those who split up their Religion, and become [mere] sects,- each party rejoicing in that which is with itself! (Yusuf Ali, 1981: 201).

Allah also tell us that He creates human in a various so that we can know each other and become together to appreciate the differences. Like what the researcher found in surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

اتَّقُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (الحجرات: ١٣)

13. O mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other [not that you

may despise [each other]. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is [he who is] the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted [with all things] (Yusuf Ali, 1987: 262).

The verses above tell that Islamic perspective teaches to understand the differences between human. Islam forbids all of kind discriminations like what Post-colonialism has created.

Therefore, the researcher tries to find out the orientalism issues that appear in the movie. The researcher focuses on the inequality between West and East through the characters of Dre and Cheng. This research also trying to finds some characteristics of Orientalism. Hence, other people can understand and aware that colonialism practices still exists around them but they do not know it. The researcher hopes this research can open the other people minds to appreciate the differences between the others.

1.2 Research Question

From the background of study, this research has a problem to be answered. The question is how is Orientalism portrayed in *The Karate Kid* movie?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the research question above, this research aims to find how Orientalism is portrayed in *The Karate Kid* movie.

1.4 Significance of Study

The significance of this research can be seen on two parts; theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, this research gives addition about Post-Colonial issue. It also can be used as references for the academic readers such as student and lecturer in understanding about Post-Colonial.

2. Practically

Practically, this research can give wide and general understanding to people about Post-colonial issue.

1.5 Literature Review

There some researches that relate to this research. Those researches talked about the topic or theory which is Post-Colonial or *The Karate Kid* movie. The first analysis that relate to this research is research entitled “Politeness principle as seen in the dialogue between characters on *The Karate Kid* movie”. It is written by Ahla Afiyati (2013) from State Institute of Islamic Studies Salatiga. In this research, she focuses on the types of intrinsic element that used in *The Karate Kid* movie and the politeness maxim in the movie. In the analysis the researcher found about plot, character and characterization, setting, point of view, and theme. The researcher also found the way the politeness maxims are conveyed in the dialogue in *The Karate Kid* movie.

Then, the researcher also found a research entitled “A Study of Post-Colonial; Western Representation of East in *Unleashed* movie”. This research is written by Septian Dona Prasetyo (2013) the student of English Literature Department in UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. This research used Post-Colonialism and Orientalism as the theory to analyze the movie. This research used qualitative method data. This research observed how the western people try to give stereotype to Danny (the character in the movie) and reconstruct his character from the imperialism and ideology of western perspective.

Another research in Post-Colonial issue is written by Afri Meldam (2009), the student of English Department in Andalas University. This research entitled “Primitiveness of The Caribbean as an Orientalism Discourse: A Post-Colonial Study on Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*”. In this research, she examined the discourse of bias of East by applying binary opposition between the main character and the native Caribbean. Meldam’s research used documentation qualitative research design. The theory that is applied is Orientalism by Edward Said. This research focuses on the binary opposition between the characters. The binary opposition here used Orientalism lens.

The next research is a graduating paper entitled “Portrayal of East and West as Seen in *The Warrior’s Way* Movie: A Post-Colonial Study”. This research is written by Nur Fauziah Hasibuan (2016) as student of English Literature Department in UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. In her research she used Orientalism as theory. She also focused on the portrayal of East and West

that showed in the *The Warrior's Way* movie. There also some binary oppositions between the East and West in this research.

This present research, however, is different from the researches above, this research is about *The Karate Kid* movie and Post-Colonial theory that have been done before. Beside, this present research is focuses on the Orientalism which is represented in the movie.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

This research uses two theories. The first theory is a post-colonialism theory specifically in Orientalism approach. And the other theories is film theory, this theory is used as the supporting theory.

1.6.1 Post-Colonialism Theory

Post-Colonial theory is the thought that appear to against the Western construction of the East. Commonly this movement come from the country that ever be colonized. Young said that “the term of post-colonial used in the social sciences with specific Marxist reference and today it continue in the language, economic, political science and international relation (2001: 58)”. The effects of Imperialism influence many aspects of colonized, and it make them become addicted to it. Thus, Post-Colonial comes to a new thought that everyone can get their freedom of Imperialism.

Griffits and Tiffins explained that Postcolonial refers to impression or reaction to colonialism, since colonization or after it (as cited in, Aziz, 2003: 201). And Post-Colonial itself becomes anti-colonial movements. Post-Colonial has an aim to increase people's awareness that they can choose their own way to free from Imperialism. This research uses Post-Colonial to show that Colonialism practice and the effects of it still exist till today, especially to the 'third world' like as Asian country. And it has a big impact to the economy, society, and culture.

Orientalism has an idea that the East is constructed by the Western because of the impact of imperialism. The decentralization and generalization of Western culture and its values dominate the life of the colonized nations. According to Said that Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the orient" and (the most time) "the occident" (as cited in Hamadi, 2014: 40). But Said believes that the existence of "the orient" and "the occident" is just imaginative geography. Said argues that "all the representation of the Orient by West constituted a determined effort to dominate and subjugate it (Carter, 2006: 116).

One of the important works in this subject is *Orientalism* by Edward Said in 1978. Said (Carter, 2006) distinguishes between three usages of the term *Orientalism* :

“Firstly, it refers to the long period of cultural and political relations between Europe and Asia. Secondly, the term is used to refer to the academic study of oriental languages and cultural which dates from the early nineteenth century. And thirdly, it is used to refer to the stereotypical views of the Orient developed by many generations of western writers and scholars, with their prejudiced views of orientals as inherently criminal and deceitful (116)”.

The West reduces the East to a few stereotypical characteristics, in this way, sense of oppressions as great as it still exist. East seen as “other” which means that East people is inferior than West. It is like what Said argues about how orientalism defines the East by stressing the sensuality, primitiveness, and despotism of the East underlined the rational and critic qualities of the West (as cited in Carter, 2006: 116).

1.6.2 Film Theory

The researcher also uses film theory to support the analysis of this movie. Film theory is used because movie is reflection of the real life. According to Strinati, movie is one of the mass media that has important role in the society because they portray many issues and ideas such as culture, phenomena, moral ethic and human relation (1995: 70). This movie also the images and part of the movie as reference, because sometime the images will give more detail in formation. Bela Balazs said that “a movie contains image which gives more detail story in that movie.

In a movie, the language of gesture is more personal and individual than the language of the word (1952: 44).

Villarejo explain there are four basics of film analysis which are: mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, sound (2006, 28: 53). In this research the researcher will use cinematography. Villarejo tells that film analysis has evolved an anthropocentric taxonomy for describing distance, that is, using the human body as the reference point for each designation:

- a. The extreme long shot (ELS), in which one can barely distinguish the human figure;
- b. The long shot (LS), in which human are distinguishable but remain dwarfed by the background;
- c. The medium long shot (MLS), or plan americain, in which the human is framed from the knees up;
- d. The medium shot (MS), in which we move in slightly to frame the human from the waist up;
- e. The medium close-up (MCU), in which we are slightly closer and see the human from the chest up;
- f. The close-up (CU), which isolated a portion of human (the face, most prominently);
- g. And the extreme close-up (ECU), in which we see a mere portion of the face (an eye, the lips (2006: 38).

1.7 Method of Research

This part explains the type of research, data source, data collection technique, and data analysis technique.

1.7.1 Type of Research

This research uses descriptive qualitative as the type of research. According to Creswell, qualitative research means to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problem (2009: 22). This type of research is used to explore data. Hence, the researcher can get the interpretation and meaning as the result of the research. In addition this research uses library research since this research uses many sources materials in library and the researcher does not observe the participants in the field or laboratory.

1.7.2 Data Source

This research uses movie entitled *The Karate Kid* as the source data. The main data are script, picture, and act from the characters of the movie. The second data come from referential books, journals, articles, and websites that relate to this topic.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

In order to collect data this research uses several steps. First, the researcher watches the movie intensively for several time to get deep understanding about the element of movie, in specific is intrinsic elements

of the movie. Second, the researcher starts to observe the scripts, pictures and acts that contains the main problem Orientalism issues such as Criminal, Despotism, primitiveness, and deceitful of East characters. Third, the researcher collects all the data that found from the movie such as intrinsic elements, the scripts of dialogue, and the pictures of act. The last, the researcher start to classify the data based on inequality between West and East.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher uses several steps on analyzing. First, the researcher classifies the data based on three categories those are pictures, acts and dialogues. Second, from the classification the researcher finds the the image of West and East. Then, those classification data are analyzed use Orientalism theory.

1.8 Paper Organization

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is about the general introduction of the research. It provides background of study, research question, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, methods of research (type of research, data source, data collection technique, and data analysis technique), and paper organization. Second chapter contains intrinsic elements of *The Karate Kid* movie. Third chapter contain the analysis of the research. And the last chapter is conclusion of the research and suggestion for the next research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

Western study about East is known as Orientalism and people who study about East is Orientalist. Orientalism itself has an idea that the East is constructed by the Western because of the impact of imperialism. The decentralization and generalization of Western culture and its values dominate the life of the colonized nations. Orientalists construct the East through their point of view with negative images. They give an inequality position to the East by binary opposition, it aims to give them a better quality than East. So, by using the inequality and stereotype, the West put themselves as superior than East and shows their domination to the East.

The Karate Kid movie is a Western movie and it is also directed by a Westerner. After conducting analysis, this research finds that the West constructs the East through the character and characterization in the movie. The East is described as criminal, deceitful, uncivilized and despotism, while the West is full of kindness. All of the negative images are described in the Asian character as Master Li, Cheng and his friends. The good qualities are shown through Harry's character.

The other result of this research is binary opposition between the East and West. Implicitly, this movie shows how superior the West is than the East. The West character shows his superiority by defeating all his rivals in the tournament.

of Kung Fu and all of his rivals are East boys. And also there are some modern aspects from the West that makes the East look old. These all Eastern Inferiority and Western superiority is still happen nowadays.

All of the evidences prove that Orientalism is portrayed in *The Karate Kid* movie. The West stereotypes to East and the inferiority of East to West are seen in this movie. This movie is created in 2010. But the researcher finds that Orientalism is still exist through *The Karate Kid* movie in this modern era.

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